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ENG 4950-001: Literary History and Bibliography, or, A Survey of Literary Survey

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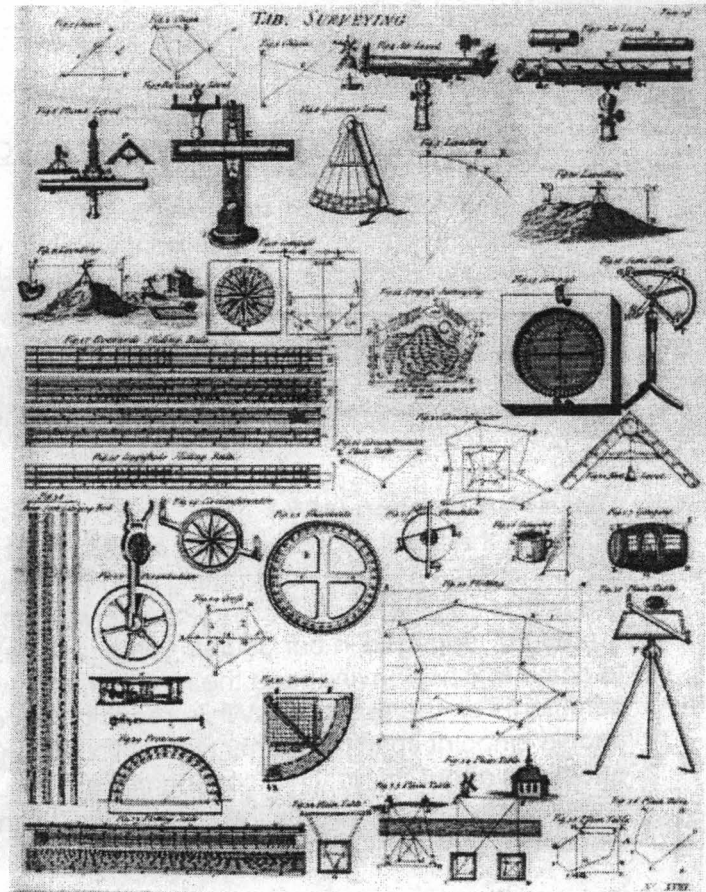
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English 4950-001: LITERARY HISTORY and BIBLIOGRAPHY,
or,
A SURVEY of LITERARY SURVEY

Spring 2009 / MWF 10:00-10:50 / Coleman 3691

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The image to the right, a “Table of Surveying” from Ephraim Chambers’ 1728 *Cyclopædia*, one of the first encyclopedias written in English, depicts various tools to use to aid in measuring, mapping, designing, and observing. This entry from Chambers’ encyclopedia offers a pictorial overview—a “survey,” if you will—of instruments available to the surveyor of the 1720s. Chambers’ work is symptomatic of a new drive for collection—of images, of words, of information—and classification that began to appear in eighteenth-century publications (and even earlier). Such a “drive to classify” eventually lead to collections of literary works according to varying criteria—e.g., purpose, theme, genre, point of origin—or what we would today call “anthologies.” In turn, these types of publications, in their sampling literary works, seem to function as the progenitors of institutional literary studies, the models for textbooks of “English Literature.”



This course offers, in a way analogous to the image from Chambers’ *Cyclopædia*, a “survey of instruments of surveying.” What I hope we can accomplish in this course is to create a survey of literary survey. That is, I hope we can do a “survey” of literature that contemplates acts of surveying, in the widest sense of the term “survey.” The term *survey* is not, however, restricted to acts of measuring geographical features. Survey connects to varying forms of observation—from statistical sampling to archeological field study to police surveillance to star-gazing.

What we will be doing in this course is almost unbearably “meta”: I want us to reflect on our own act of “literary surveying” as we read poems, story, and plays that thematize (or act out or comment on) surveying. If, however, we “survey” literature without thinking about what it means to “survey”, we are more likely to run the risk of repeating historical methods that make “survey classes” counterproductive.

Texts

Norton Anthology of British Literature I and II

Many texts will be distributed as pdfs

Many online texts will be assigned

Lunsford, Andrea. Easy Writer.

Requirements

Participation	15%
Exams	45% (15% each for 3 exams)
Group Syllabus and Presentation	20%
Web Material Collection and Publication	20%

****ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS THE COURSE****

Exams, (45%, 15% each for three tests)

The tests will verify your engagement with and your ability to retain the wealth of historical material that this course offers. There will be no multiple-choice and no true-or-false questions: you will either know and/or remember our class discussions and course texts, or you will not. My tests tend to concentrate on factual data—who wrote the text? When was it published? What does such and such mean for such-and-such a writer?—and, as fair warning, many students are unaccustomed to the course's evaluation methods.

Class Participation (15%)

Although there will be a number of required, yet ungraded assignments throughout the quarter, constituting a portion your class-participation grade, the seminar format of this course will necessitate you be thoroughly engaged in our course goals (see below). I will expect you to come to class having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. While reading the course material, you should pinpoint specific moments of difficulty, and come to class with questions about them. If you attend class without reading the texts carefully and completely, you will almost certainly fail the series of tests and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely.

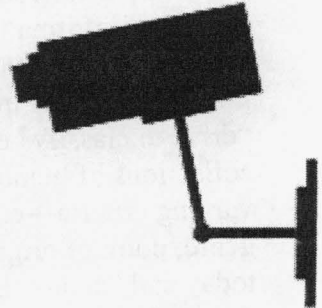
Group Syllabus and Presentation (20%)

In groups of four, you will create a reading list for a survey course concentrating on a certain aspect of survey. This syllabus will contain both primary texts from the medieval period through to the twentieth century, and also a small number of theoretical or critical texts that could be used in aiding students in surveying such a wide sweep of historical literatures.

Web Material Collection and Publication (20%)

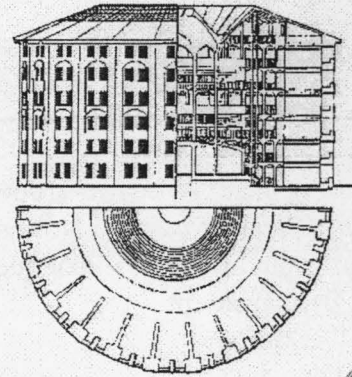
Before the end of the course, we will collect a set of materials that we will find a way of making available online. Your work in making this a reality may consist in any number of possibilities: web design, collection of texts, researching, quality control, and so on. If you know nothing about how to put something online, this will no longer be the case by the end of the semester.

TESTS AND EXAMS: You cannot make up a test or exam after the class period in which it is administered.



Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will likely result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is the English Department's statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.



Paper Policies

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. **Late papers will not be commented upon, and will be marked a half grade lower for every class period late.** Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a "zero," but must nevertheless be submitted in order to pass the course.

Your paper should be stapled and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

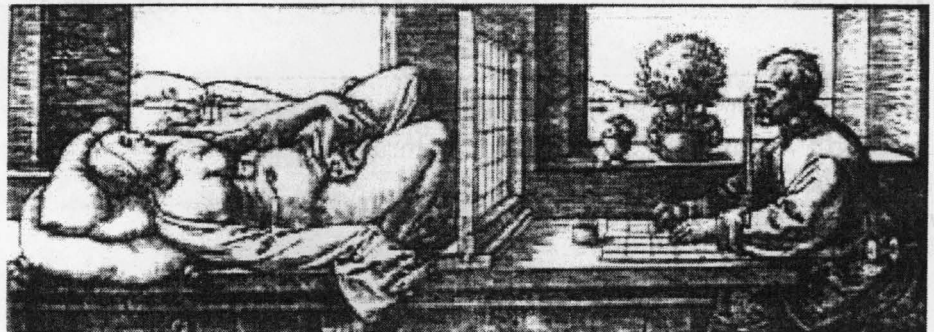
Absence Policy:

When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day's class. YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class. Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized. Whether these are excused or unexcused absences does not matter for this course. Being late for class will be counted as an absence.

If you are late for or miss six (8) class meetings, constituting 20% of the course class time, you cannot pass this course. If you think you will be late for or miss eight classes, you should strongly reconsider registering for this class. Once you have missed eight classes, you are welcome to continue visiting the class, but you will receive a failure on your transcript.

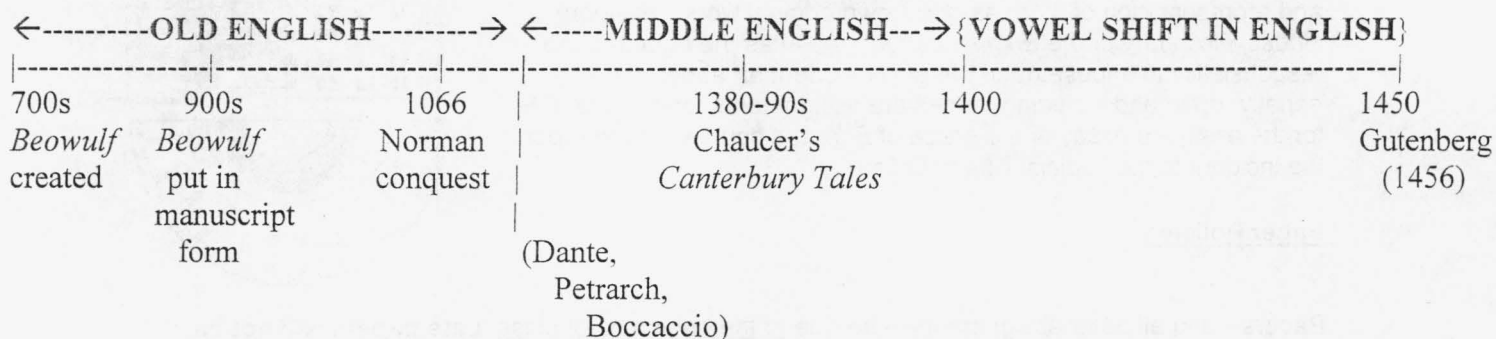
Emailing Policy:

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. **DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN "UPDATE" ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE.** Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.



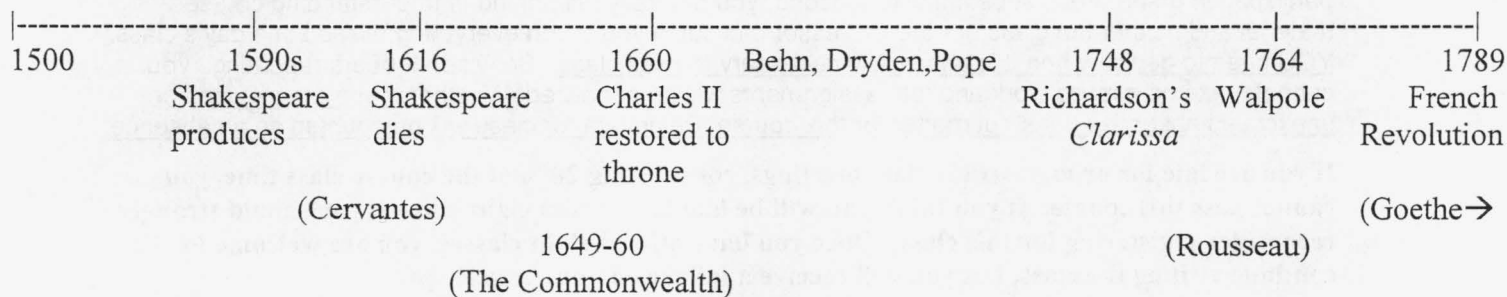
English 4950
(mostly) ENGLISH LITERARY TIMELINE

←[starts in the 400s]-----Medieval Period / The "Middle Ages" -----→



←--Early Modern Period / "Renaissance"----→ ←--- Restoration or Neoclassical Period / 18th Century ---→

←-----MODERN ENGLISH-----→



←-----Romantic Period-----→←--19th Century / Victorian Period-----→←20th/Modern, Postmodern→

